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OLD WOODBURY
and adjacent
DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE
IN CONNECTICUT

With Introductory Text by
Wesley S Bessell

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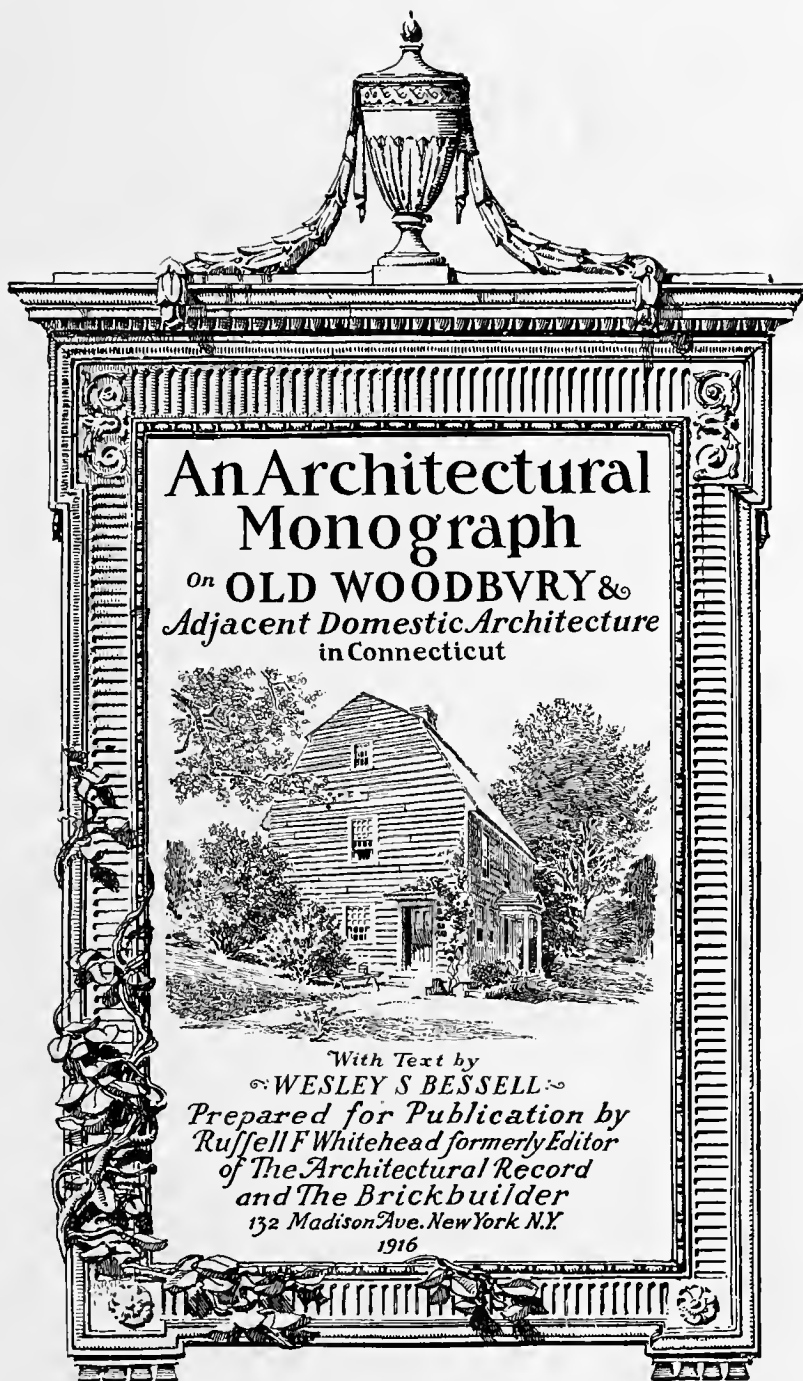
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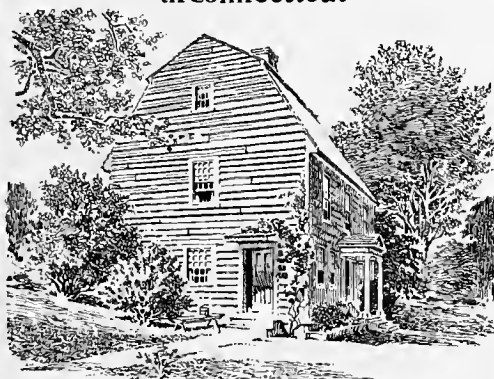
Vol. 2.

No. 5

Folio



An Architectural
Monograph
On OLD WOODBURY &
Adjacent Domestic Architecture
in Connecticut



With Text by
WESLEY S BESSELL
Prepared for Publication by
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of *The Architectural Record*
and *The Brickbuilder*
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THE SILES HOUSE, LOWER WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT. Detail of Entrance.

An example of the two-story motif with pedimented entrance which was employed in Connecticut in the prerevolutionary houses.

The WHITE PINE SERIES of ARCHITECTURAL MONOGRAPHS

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION SUGGESTING THE
ARCHITECTURAL USES OF WHITE PINE AND ITS
AVAILABILITY TODAY AS A STRUCTURAL WOOD

Vol. II

OCTOBER, 1916

No. 5

OLD WOODBURY AND ADJACENT DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF CONNECTICUT

By WESLEY S. BESSELL

The old Connecticut houses have had special study by Mr. Bessell. His water-color sketches and measured drawings of these masterpieces of Colonial architecture have proved a source of inspiration to the architectural profession. His writings are an ardent plea for the correct interpretation and design of the architecture of our forefathers. Mr. Bessell is well known in New York as a designer, having been in the offices of Charles A. Rich, Theodate Pope, Frank E. Wallis and others. He is at present a practising architect in New York and the architect for the new Mount Vernon Seminary at Washington, D.C.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIAN BUCKLY AND THE AUTHOR

THE period of our Colonial architecture does not seem very distant when it is viewed in comparison with the history of architecture of the world, and yet in the short three centuries between then and now great changes have taken place to make our modern architecture a conglomerate mass of uninteresting work. Why this unfortunate development should have been permitted to take place when so many examples of the best of our seventeenth and eighteenth century dwellings remain all about us for our guidance and emulation is a source of wonderment to all thinking persons. The rapid growth of the country both in size and wealth may have robbed us of the desire to express ourselves in terms as simple and sweet as those of our forefathers, but why we should have absolutely lost the spirit of the older homes is hard to understand.

Perhaps if we step back to the town of Woodbury in the pleasant little Naugatuck Valley of Connecticut and picture it at the beginning of our Revolutionary struggles we may gain a concise idea of the spirit that then existed but which unfortunately seems to have long since been snuffed out. If we could have been in this quaint town one Sunday morning long ago we could not help but have become imbued with its atmosphere. It was a clear, bright morning, one long to be remembered by the inhabitants. The British at Boston had already marched out and met the minute-men, and now the men and boys of Woodbury expected to depart in order to join Washington's command, and on

this particular Sunday, just after service at the North Church, a band of men were to leave their homes, some for long periods, others for all time. As the bell tolled in the belfry of North Church, which Hezekiah Platt had designed and built and whose history was to be written in later times, fate decreed that one Jonathan, son of Hezekiah, was here to take leave of Sally Orton, daughter of William Orton. Outlined above the trees the North Church spire stood, dignified, pure white, and delicate of design. In the play of light and shadow, the pilastered front supporting the pediment in which the green blind spread in fan-like shape blended well with the blue and pale yellow facings of the Continental army uniforms so proudly worn by the boys of Woodbury. Sally and Jonathan were wont to take leave, for they were childhood sweethearts, and the Orton house was soon no longer to have Jonathan Platt swing on the picket gate and call to Sally, and then hide behind the stately rose bush that covered its entrance. Just beyond this scene stood the Orton House with its quaint wooden doorway and rough stone door-step, which had served to bind these two. Grown to sweet maidenhood, she had opened this same door for him, for his tap on the knocker was as well known to Sally as his laughter, and if in her anxiety to answer that knock she upset the candle-holder from its lodging place, we can now forgive her for the charred lace work that suffered for her haste. When once inside the stair hall with its stairway of turned balusters and newels, carved scrolls at the open end of

the strings, one could see that it was all the work of the elder Platt. Jonathan was ushered into the parlor. Here he could gaze upon the handiwork of his parent by way of a panelled mantel and wainscot, but his gaze rested not long on his father's labors, but upon a pretty face in a poke bonnet, and strange as it may seem, the work of one Hezekiah Platt was no longer thought of. Hezekiah Platt was responsible in his small way for many of the buildings of Woodbury, for he had built for one Abner Lockwood the house at Long Hill where the

Benjamin had been their architectural guides, and they could not break from the tradition that had been established.

The soldiers from Woodbury left by the post road on this memorable Sunday—left behind all that was theirs, the places their fathers and they had created out of wood and masonry. Shaded streets grew narrow as they passed by the old tavern in the bend of the road where they were lost to view. Over a rise they could still see the North Church spire, quietly nestling in the beautiful valley; and by the church



THE ORTON HOUSE, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT. (Home of Sally Orton.)

road turns sharp on its way to Sandy Hook, and the Siles House in lower Woodbury with its pedimented entrance, and then the Judson House, and the Bostwick House, with its simple entrance flanked by well proportioned windows on which the blinds gave a charming color against the white pine clapboards. Yes, the elder Platt had played an important part in the building up of Woodbury, but as things were reckoned then, his houses were but of a type, exemplified by others, similar in design but different in detail, and no one thought but of this kind of house, for had they not all lived the simple life, and why should they not carry out the portrayal of what life was to them in their homes of wood? Beatty Langley and Asher

sat Sally Orton, not daring to raise her head, for her very life had gone forth, and Woodbury's youth and manhood, and particularly Jonathan Platt's, were now facing a duty made necessary by oppression, a duty that meant, if well done, the keeping of home and family together—the homes they had built with their own hands, the homes that they had worked for and in which they had taken so much pride. These must stand, must exist, for they were part of themselves. Had not Absalom Turnbull, the village smith, forged the hinges and moulded the knobs on those houses, was not the timber hewn from the clearing and run through the saw by their hands? And so it was that the work of our forefathers, created in mind and mod-

elled in wood, was now to be protected by such men who, going forth to preserve their handiwork, counted not the cost.

This spirit existed at that time, this spirit still exists, but why has the present generation lapsed into a don't-care feeling regarding what home is or can be made? Why do we who sally forth nowadays, familiar as we are with these works of our forefathers, permit the atrocities committed by the so-much-per-yard mills and ten-dollar-per-house, profit-taking contractors? Home does not mean much

strange to say, this is what he thinks is beautiful. One wonders what Jonathan Platt, going forth to protect, and Sally Orton, remaining in the background to keep in order for his homecoming the old Orton house with its hollyhocks, foxgloves, and boxwood hedge, with its quiet simplicity, would think if they could view these modern so-called homes. One cannot help but wonder also if the man of to-day has lost the desire for beauty or if it has only been taken away from him by the constant presentation of something hideous. Let us hope that the latter



HOUSE AT WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT. (Jonathan Platt's Home.)

to these concerns. The pride taken in and thought given to his buildings by Hezekiah Platt do not interest them. Their chief thoughts and interest are commercial ones, and the houses which they produce are usually sad and material examples of what not to do. The beautiful villas with special mention of "Colonial" style advertised for sale by our present day get-rich-quick-build-a-house-over-night realty developers are the blight of our architectural development. How one wishes the word "villa" had never existed, and that it might constitute a crime to desecrate the word "colonial."

This is what we see to-day—this is what the average citizen is buying and building, and,

is the case, and that there are numerous Jonathan Platts and Sally Ortons, and that all that is needed for the betterment of our domestic architecture is the removal of the evil manner in which it is created.

Jonathan returns to Woodbury after having served his country well, and Sally is there to greet him. Of course the boxwood hedge is larger, and the rose bush almost hides from view the gate, but all is the same upon his return as far as the house is concerned. The descendants of Jonathan and Sally, taking up where they left off, continued the work of their fathers, for did not the Dennings and Captain Asubel Arnold build according to tradition? Their houses on the bend of the road are pure

Colonial. And until the Greek revival there was no departure from a general type; even with the advent of the Neo-Grec it was so woven into these older creations that no real damage was done, but after this period chaos ran rampant, and as a result we find the non-descripts which unfortunately are with us to-day, the so-called Elizabethan, Gothic and Queen Anne houses with their paper doily edging and verge board scalloping in imitation of pantry shelving paper.

Unfortunately this period acted like a blight on America's architecture, for it fastened itself to the pure examples which fell into its hands, and to-day it is difficult to find a



Detail of Corner Boards.

THE JABES BACON HOUSE, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT.

In this example a bead takes the place of a stile between the panels. The panel mould miter with the lowest member of the overhang mouldings.

house, either old or new, which is free from its ravages.

It is with a great deal of inward satisfaction and pleasure, however, that we note that the descendants of Jonathan and Sally are again rising to meet and prevent such conditions from going on unchecked. To-day there is a refreshing influence at work in our midst for the construction of houses for these descendants. A new Jonathan Platt and Sally are taking up the work where the former left off. Our architecture is assuming a definite character, and surely will be benefited by the careful study being made by this new generation of architects, who are delving into the beauties of

(Continued on page 11)



THE JABES BACON HOUSE, ON THE LOWER ROAD, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT.

One of the earliest Woodbury houses of the double overhang type. The clapboards are fastened by boat nails left clearly exposed and painted over. The porch is of much later date.



THE LOCKWOOD HOUSE, CROMWELL, CONNECTICUT.
The main house is over two hundred years old. The gambrel-roofed ell composes nicely with the single-pitch roof of the house.



HOUSE NEAR SANDY HOOK, CONNECTICUT, ON THE SOUTHBURY ROAD.

Typical of the early eighteenth-century houses of the lean-to variety in this section. The window are divided into twenty-four lights. The original gutters were of wood



HOUSE ON THE LOWER ROAD, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT.

A most picturesque composition nestling in valley. One of the few homes remaining in almost their original state; the unsightly modern leader across the end is unfortunate.

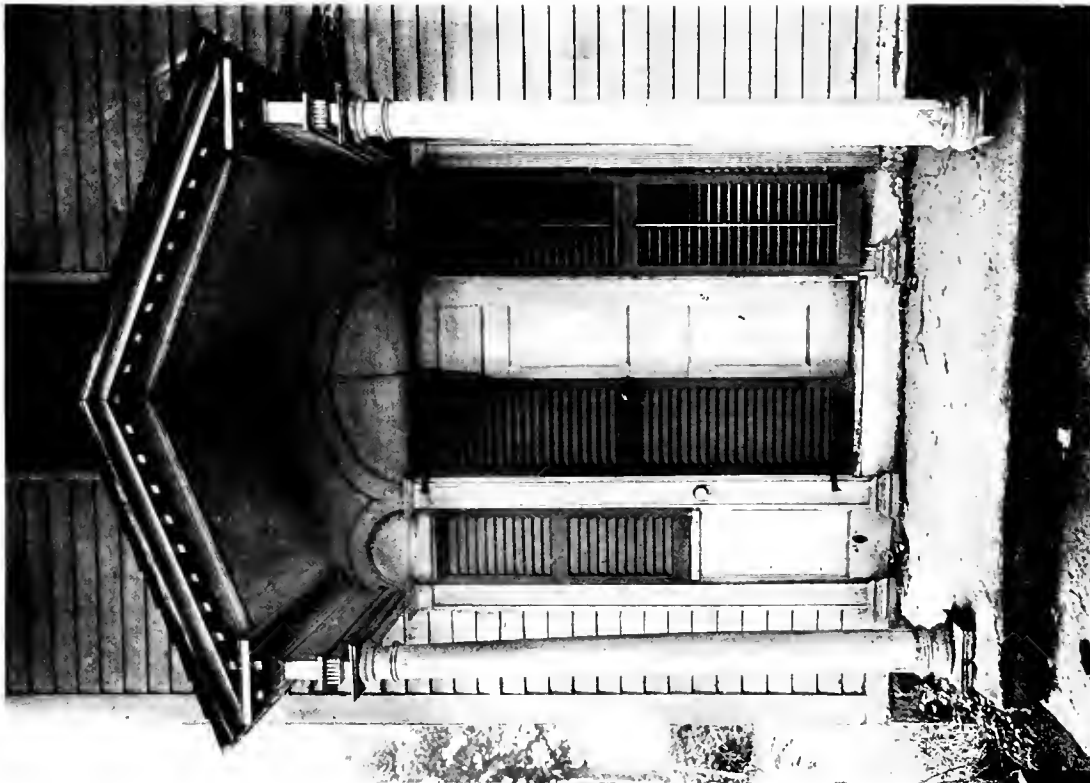


THE OLD "GLEBE" HOUSE, LOWER ROAD, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT. Built in 1771.

The very broad corner boards are paneled on both sides without using a stile and the moulding is returned across the top. The first Episcopal bishop in America was selected in this house.



Rather a good entablature. The triglyphs are not logical in the frieze of a porch of this kind, but are found, however, very often in Colonial examples.



TWO PORCHES IN OLD WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT.

Door blinds add much charm and color to this example. There is something of quaintness and homeliness about these simple blinds.

the older examples, obtaining in their work those qualities and that spirit of quaintness known as America's gifts to the architecture of the world, which have been so long neglected by those responsible for our domestic architecture. This Colonial architecture of our forefathers is again about to come into its own; indeed, there are to-day many instances where we may discover work which is faithful in every way to the best of our early traditions. There is a reversion to a consideration of those subtle qualities which produced the many homes of past centuries that possess a charm that age

alone cannot give, but which is the result of that true art of the Colonial builders whose lives were expressed in the design of their dwellings. It is to be hoped that this interest which is being manifested in the best of the old examples of house-building will prevent any further spread of past building evils. That these evils can be removed is certain, but it needs the sincere and untiring help of every one, both in the profession and out. Cosmopolitan America can and should develop a type, and that type may readily have the Colonial traditions as a basic principle.



Photograph by Lewis E. Welsh

THE SANFORD HOUSE, LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT.



OLD SLAVE QUARTERS OF THE BACON HOUSE, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT.

This building is now used as a tea house.



OLD HOUSE AT RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT.

The lines of the porch roof have been softened by a very happy treatment



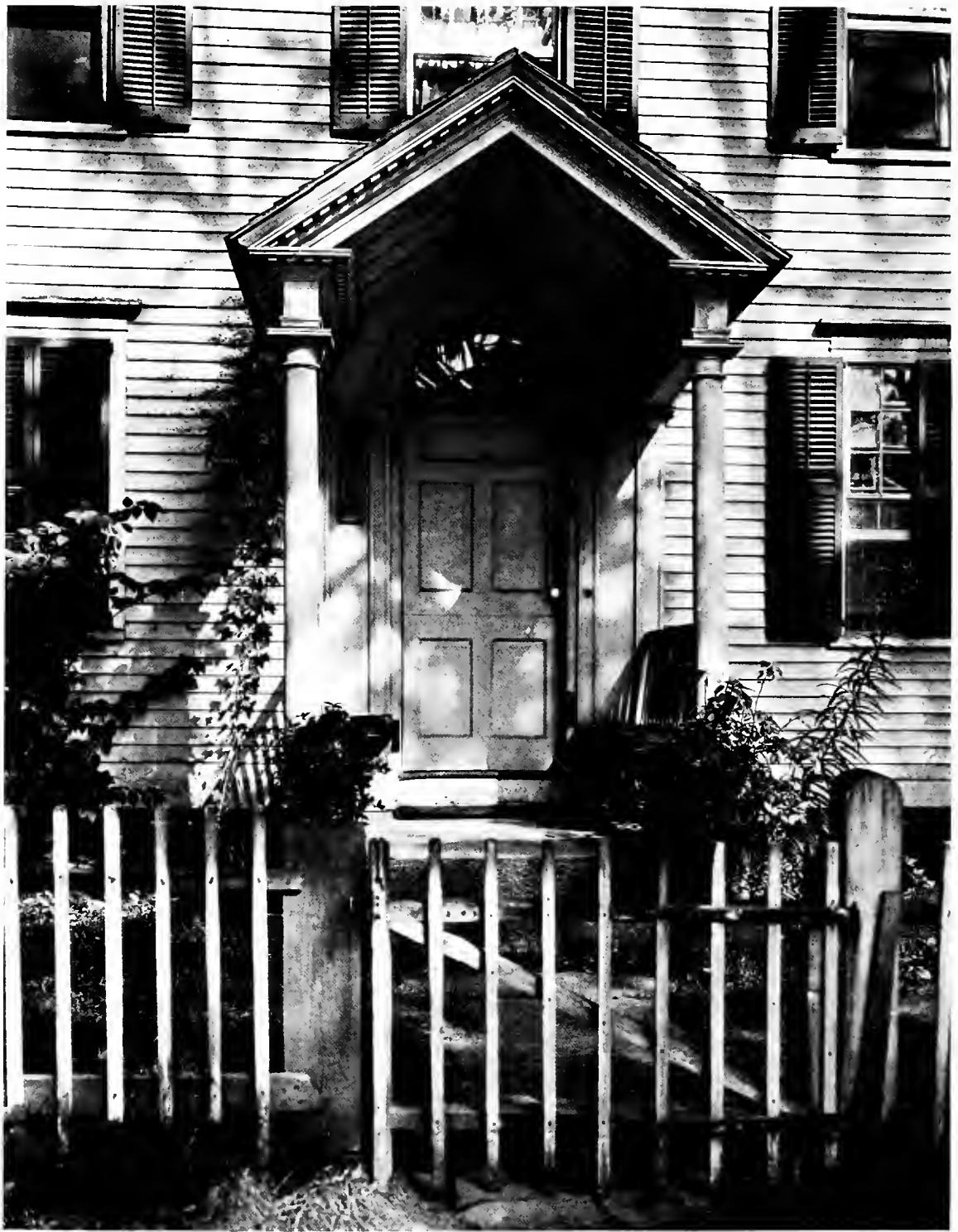
THE MARSHALL HOUSE, WOODBURY, CONNECTICUT.

The wing is the original house and is over two hundred and thirty years old. The row of two-story columns of the living-porch is characteristic of this section and a pleasing method of handling the piazza problem.



THE BOSTWICK HOUSE, SOUTHBURY, CONNECTICUT.

The fenestration is excellent for a small house and the detail of cornice and window trim very carefully designed



THE BOSTWICK HOUSE, SOUTHBURY, CONNECTICUT. Detail of Entrance Porch.

A good example of this type of porch with wood-paneled soffit of the hood. The seats at the side are modern.

THE AVAILABLE SUPPLY OF WHITE PINE TIMBER

By FREDERICK E. WEYERHAEUSER

Office of Frederick Weyerhaeuser, Saint Paul, Minnesota

WITHIN the past few months, while discussing methods of advertising, a business acquaintance asked, "Why advertise White Pine when the supply is so nearly exhausted?" The question reveals a wide-spread misunderstanding as to the available quantity of White Pine timber,—a misunderstanding which is not surprising when one recalls the statement of—ten repeated some five years ago by a leading exponent of conservation, that the supply of timber of all kinds in the United States would be consumed within twenty-five years. Such a statement must leave the impression that if our timber supply is so nearly gone, then surely White Pine, the building wood most useful and most desired, must remain in only very limited quantities. Without anything even approaching accurate information covering the vast timbered areas of the United States, it is not so surprising as it is unfortunate that such unfounded statements are made.

How inadequate have been the estimates of standing timber is shown by an experience of my father, the late Frederick Weyerhaeuser. When he began manufacturing White Pine lumber at Rock Island, Illinois, in 1859, he looked about for a dependable source of logs for the saw-mill. Black River in Wisconsin was the nearest stream from which to draw, but he was advised by well-informed loggers to go further North to the Chippewa River, because the Black River timber supply was already nearly exhausted. As a matter of fact, logs in consider-

able quantities were driven down the Black River for forty years afterwards.

While it may seem incredible, as early as 1650 fears were expressed that the very large foreign trade would soon deplete the supply of White Pine timber, which was then cut mainly on the Piscataqua River in Maine and New Hampshire. In 1880 Professor Sargeant, in

connection with the census of the United States of that year, estimated the Minnesota White Pine timber supply to be 8,170,000,000 feet, but sixteen years later General C. C. Andrews, Minnesota State Fire Warden, estimated the supply at 16,840,000,000 feet, more than twice the amount reported by Professor Sargeant.

It would of course be absurd to argue that the supply of White Pine timber is as great as it was years ago, or that White Pine manufacturers could long supply the United States with its entire lumber requirements. But for

the many uses in house construction for which White Pine excels, there is unquestionably an abundant supply for generations to come.

The United States Forest Service in January, 1915, estimated the stand of White Pine timber in this country by groups of States as follows:

Northeastern States	16,400,000,000 feet
Middle Atlantic States	5,900,000,000 "
Idaho	24,540,000,000 "
Lake States	12,000,000,000 "
Total	58,840,000,000 "

Unfortunately the estimate of the Forest Service covering the Lake States includes what is



FREDERICK E. WEYERHAEUSER

commonly known as "Norway Pine," the total being 18,400,000,000 feet; but it is probably safe to assume that of this amount 12,000,000 - 000 feet is White Pine, and in the above computation it is so tabulated.

Attention is also called to the fact that these figures do not include Western Yellow Pine, which is often advertised and sold under such names as California or Oregon White Pine. While Western Yellow Pine is a wood of excellent merit for many uses, it must not be confused with the true White Pine, the "*Pinus Strobus*" of the Eastern States and the "*Pinus Monticola*" of the States west of the Rocky Mountains.

In addition to the above figures there is a considerable amount of true White Pine in Montana, Washington and Oregon, and also in British Columbia, which province alone is estimated to have something over two billion feet. Our Eastern retail markets also draw heavily upon the White Pine of Eastern Canada,—the provinces of Ontario and Quebec being credited with billions of feet, while all of the Maritime Provinces contain considerable tracts of White Pine scattered through their vast forests of Spruce and Hemlock.

Mr. Henry S. Graves, Chief Forester of the United States, calls attention to the truly startling fact that after logging has been going on for approximately 200 years in New Eng-

land and New York, the seven States within that territory were in 1915 credited with 16,400,000,000 feet of White Pine, in some instances the third and even the fourth crop being available to log. Timber grows rapidly in the Atlantic States, but the possibility of reproducing White Pine in Idaho and in our North Pacific Coast States is certainly no less promising. However, disregarding the annual growth and reproduction of White Pine timber, together with the possibilities of increasing such reproduction through proper scientific forestry methods, and also disregarding the Canadian supply, 59,000,000,000 feet of available White Pine timber still standing in the United States is an amount that almost staggers the imagination. Under present-day methods of manufacture, the lumber produced from this amount of White Pine timber would provide a fence of inch boards 600 feet high around the world at the equator, or would build complete 2,500,000 houses of average size.

No attempt is made in this article to dwell or even touch upon the individual and distinctive merits of White Pine as a building wood, its sole purpose being to bring to the architectural profession such facts as will be convincing proof of the abundant supply of White Pine timber to-day available for their use and to dispel any erroneous impression as to its scarcity.

The subject of the ninth Monograph will be "Old Maryland Houses," with descriptive text by Charles A. Ziegler, Architect

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